

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An award point service system, comprising:
a network comprising:
a point issuing device that issues points to a customer who purchases an article;
a first memory that only stores data of the points issued to the customer in at least one virtual store on the network;
a second memory that only stores data of the points issued to the customer in at least one actual store;
a data access permitting device that permits the data of the points issued to the customer to be read from the first and second memories; and
a point reducing device that allows use of at least a part of the points read from the first and second memories by subtracting the at least part of the points from the data of the points stored in the first and second memories; wherein
the first memory and the second memory are associated with a same company,
wherein
the at least one virtual store established on the network is accessible to the point issuing device; and wherein
the at least one actual store is accessible to the point reducing device.
2. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one actual store is accessible to the point issuing device.
3. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one virtual store is accessible to the point reducing device.

4. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 2, wherein the at least one virtual store is accessible to the point reducing device.

5. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 1, further comprising a managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device.

6. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 2, further comprising a managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device.

7. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 3, further comprising a managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device.

8. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 4, further comprising a managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device.

9. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

10. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 2, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

11. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 4, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the

terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

12. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 3, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

13. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 5, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

14. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 9, wherein the recording medium comprises a medium used for making a payment.

15. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 9, wherein the terminal is a point of sale (POS) terminal.

16. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 9, wherein the terminal is a credit authorization terminal (CAT).

17. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a credit company that issues credit to the customer comprising:

a first credit company memory for storing data of the points issued to the customer in virtual stores;

a second credit company memory for storing data of the points issued to the customer in an actual store;

a credit company virtual server connected to the first credit company memory that is configured to communicate with the at least one virtual store; and

a credit company actual server connected to the second credit company memory that is configured to communicate with the at least one actual store,

wherein the customer can purchase items from the at least one virtual store and the at least one actual store with credit.

18. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 17, further comprising:

an information processing center communicatively connected to the credit company actual server and credit company virtual server that processes purchases made under credit by the customer wherein the credit company actual server communicates with the at least one actual store via the information processing center.

19. (Currently Amended) An award point service system, comprising:

a network comprising:

a point issuing device that issues points to a customer who purchases an article;

a first memory that only stores data of the points issued to the customer in at least one virtual store;

a second memory that only stores data of the points issued to the customer in at least one actual store;

a data access permitting device that permits the data of the points issued to the customer to be read from the memory; and

a point reducing device that allows use of at least a part of the points read from the memory by subtracting the at least part of the points from the data of the points stored in the memory; wherein

the first memory and the second memory are associated with a same company,
wherein

the at least one virtual store established on the network is accessible to the point reducing device; and wherein

the at least one actual store is accessible to the point issuing device.

20. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein the at least one virtual store is accessible to the point issuing device.

21. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein the at least one actual store is accessible to the point reducing device.

22. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 20, further comprising:

a credit company that issues credit to the customer comprising:

a first credit company memory for storing data of the points issued to the customer in virtual stores;

a second credit company memory for storing data of the points issued to the customer in an actual store;

a credit company virtual server connected to the first credit company memory that is configured to communicate with the at least one virtual store;

a credit company actual server connected to the second credit company memory that is configured to communicate with the at least one actual store,

wherein the customer can purchase items from the at least one virtual store and the at least one actual store with credit.

23. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in one of the at least one actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

24. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 20, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in one of the at least one actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

25. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 21, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in one of the at least one actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

26. (Original) An award point service system according to claim 23, wherein the recording medium comprises a medium used for making a payment.

27. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable recording medium used in a point service system including a network comprising an award point issuing device that issues points to a customer who purchases an article, a first memory that only stores data of the points issued to the customer from at least one virtual store, a second memory that only stores data of the points issued to the customer from at least one actual store, a tie-up company comprising the first and second memories, a data access permitting device that permits the data of the points issued to the customer to be read from the first and second memories, and a point reducing device that allows use of at least a part of the points read from the first and second memories by subtracting the at least part of the points from the data of the points stored in the first and second memories, the recording medium comprising:

a first working file that stores points; and

a second working files that stores information identifying the tie-up company, wherein the recording medium transmits and receives the data of the points to and from the first and second memories via the data access permitting device, and wherein

the recording medium stores the points issued or reduced by any of the at least one virtual store and the at least one actual store.

28. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 27, comprising an IC card having an IC chip.

29. (Currently Amended) An award point service management method for use with an award point service system having a network comprising a tie-up company having a first memory that only stores points relating to purchases made by the customer in at least one of virtual ~~stores~~store and a second memory that only stores points relating to purchases made by the customer in at least one of actual ~~stores~~store, the tie-up company managing points issued to users from a plurality of stores, the method comprising the steps of:

issuing points to a customer who purchases an article in at least one of virtual stores established on a network;

recording the issued points in the first memory; and

subtracting points used by the customer in at least one of actual stores from the data of the points stored in the first memory such that the points are used by the customer for purchasing an article in the at least one of actual stores.

30. (Currently Amended) An award point service management method for use with an award point service system having a network comprising a tie-up company having a first memory that only stores points relating to purchases made by the customer in the at least one of virtual ~~stores~~store and a second memory that only stores points relating to purchases made by the customer in the at least one of actual ~~stores~~store, the tie-up company managing points issued to users from a plurality of stores, the method comprising the steps of:

issuing points to a customer who purchases an article in at least one of actual stores;

recording the issued points in the second memory;

transferring at least a portion of the points in the second memory to the first memory; and

subtracting points used by the customer in at least one of virtual stores from the data of the points stored in the first memory such that the points are used by the customer for purchasing an article in the at least one of virtual stores.

31. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the first memory stores points issued by two or more virtual stores and the second memory stores points issued by two or more actual stores.

32. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein all of the points issued by virtual stores are stored in the first memory and all of the points issued by actual stores are stored in the second memory.

33. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 1, further comprising at least one tie-up company comprising the first and second memories.

34. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein the first memory stores points issued by two or more virtual stores and the second memory stores points issued by two or more actual stores.

35. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein all of the points issued by virtual stores are stored in the first memory and all of the points issued by actual stores are stored in the second memory.

36. (Previously Presented) An award point service system according to claim 19, further comprising at least one tie-up company comprising the first and second memories.

37. (New) An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the managing device comprises:

a switching server connected to the network which controls the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device to ensure that the

operation costs of the award point service system born by each of the at least one actual store and at least one virtual store are proportional to the use made of the award point service system by the store.

38. (New) An award point service system according to claim 17, further comprising:

a credit company registration device that enables the customer to apply to a credit card company to obtain a credit card as part of registering to join the award point service system, the credit registration device providing the customer with acceptance by the credit card company during the registration process when the customer is qualified by the credit card company.